

READING IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE

What is Evidence-Based Reading Instruction for Dyslexia?

Instruction that is grounded in high-quality, peer-reviewed research showing it improves reading outcomes for students with dyslexia. Hallmarks include:

- **Explicit & Systematic:** Skills are directly taught in a planned sequence from simple to complex.
- **Diagnostic & Data-Driven:** Ongoing progress monitoring; instruction is adjusted based on need.
- **Multisensory:** Integrates visual, auditory, kinesthetic-tactile pathways to strengthen decoding and spelling.
- **Language-Based:** Direct instruction in phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllable types/division, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- **Delivered with Fidelity:** Taught by trained professionals as designed—no improvisation, shortcuts, or mixing with non-aligned methods.

Examples (program families): Wilson Reading System®, Orton–Gillingham®, Barton Reading & Spelling System®, and other **structured literacy** approaches recognized by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA).

What is Structured Literacy?

A comprehensive, research-driven approach identified by IDA as most effective for dyslexia. Core features:

1. **Systematic & Cumulative** — Concepts build in a logical order; previously learned material is continuously reviewed.
2. **Explicit Instruction** — Teachers model *what*, *how*, and *why*; nothing is left to inference.
3. **Multisensory & Interactive** — Simultaneous engagement of multiple modalities.
4. **Diagnostic Teaching** — Pacing and practice are individualized based on student data.
5. **Focus on the Structure of Language** — Phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable types, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

What does “with Fidelity” mean?

Delivering the program **as written**, by a teacher who has been **properly trained/certified**, using:

- The authorized lesson sequence and materials
- Sufficient **intensity** (e.g., frequency, duration, group size)
- Accurate **error correction**, **cumulative review**, and **mastery checks**
- **Progress monitoring** and data-based decisions

Fidelity ensures the student receives the **same research-validated treatment** that produced the outcomes in the evidence base.

Legal Foundations (Federal)

- **IDEA** — Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.; FAPE requirement, 20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(1); Child Find, §1412(a)(3); “specially designed instruction,” 20 U.S.C. §1401(29); implementing regs, **34 C.F.R. Part 300** (e.g., §§300.39, 300.304–300.324).
Requires identification and provision of appropriate, evidence-based instruction via the IEP to meet unique needs.
- **Section 504** — Rehabilitation Act §504, 29 U.S.C. §794; **34 C.F.R. Part 104** (e.g., §104.33 FAPE; §104.36 procedural safeguards).
Guarantees FAPE and necessary services/accommodations, including appropriate reading instruction.
- **ADA (Title II)** — 42 U.S.C. §12132; **28 C.F.R. Part 35**.
Prohibits disability discrimination and requires equal access to skilled instruction and programs.

Bottom line: When dyslexia impairs reading, schools must provide **appropriate, evidence-based, structured literacy instruction** delivered with **fidelity** to ensure meaningful progress.

What Schools Must Do (Action Checklist)

- Timely **screening/evaluation** and **Child Find** for suspected dyslexia (K–12, not just early grades).
- Adopt an IDA-aligned **structured literacy** program and materials.
- Ensure teachers are **trained/certified** to deliver the program with **fidelity**.

- Provide sufficient **intensity** (frequency, duration, group size) and **1:1 or very small-group** when indicated.
- **Monitor progress** frequently and adjust instruction based on data.
- Put the **specific methodology** and service details in the IEP/504 plan when it is critical to the student's progress.